

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 and 12-14 are currently pending, Claims 1, 12, and 13 having been amended, and Claim 11 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The changes and additions to the claims do not add new matter and are supported by the originally filed specification.

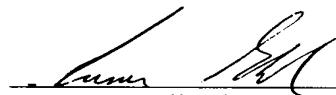
In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima (U.S. Patent No. 7,176,962) in view of Levien (U.S. Patent No. 5,524,162); Claims 2 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima in view of Levien and Satoh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,708,863, hereafter “Satoh”); Claims 3 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima in view of Levien, Satoh and Ohishi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,713,049, hereafter “Ohishi”); Claims 4 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima in view of Levien, Satoh and Yoshihara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,172,233, hereafter “Yoshihara”); and Claims 5 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ejima in view of Levien, Satoh and Imada (U.S. Pub. No. 2004/0090532); and Claims 11-14 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but containing allowable subject matter.

Applicant thanks the examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In view of this indication, Independent Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the features of allowable Claim 11. Allowable Claim 13 has been amended to be in independent form and reciting the features of Claim 1. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1 and 13 (and all associated dependent claims) should be allowed.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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